Nixon's Paris Politicking

Paris

French officials are resentful that President Nixon went politicking in Paris while President Georges Pompidou was still fresh in his grave.

There has been no official comment or protest.

"But this does not mean that we were necessarily pleased with Nixon's behavior here," one official source said.

The state-owned television system and pro-government newspapers noted critically that Mr. Nixon met with six world leaders here while France had only an interim president in office.

Mr. Nixon attended a 55-minute memorial service for Pompidou here last Saturday and met with acting President Alain Poher for another 45 minutes. Then he spent a total of seven hours conferring with the leaders of the Soviet Union, Japan, West Germany, Britain, Denmark and Italy.

"The spectacle of Mr. Nixon holding court in Paris and receiving . . . the homage of certain of his European vassals is just a big show . . ." Le Figaro said yesterday.

Draws French Officials' Fire

"This show was judged in political circles to be a supreme lack of tact," it added.

A commentary on television after Mr. Nixon returned to Washington on Sunday said: "Political circles are perhaps relieved that Nixon has left after turning Paris into a capital of world politics."

Le Monde noted scathingly that a British newspaper quoted Mr. Nixon as saying "this is a great day for France" shortly after the memorial service. Mr Nixon had been enthusiastically shaking hands with a crowd just a few hundred yards from the Elysee Palace, Le Monde noted.

"Had he forgotten the grave circumstances of his visit to Paris, or had he — wittingly or unwittingly — betrayed his real thoughts?" Le Monde commented.

"Did he want to publicize his hope that France, after the death of President Pompidou, would docilely reenter the Atlantic fold? Or did he want to thank Pompidou for allowing him — in these circumstances — to meet so many political partners in such a short time?" Le Monde added.

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